THE VENUS OF MILO.

(Venus Victrix.)

BY MRS. SARAH HELEN WHITMAN.

"When I entered for the last time that magnificent hall of the Louvre, where stands on her pedestal the ever blessed goddess of beauty, our beloved Lady of Milo, the divine image looked on me with a face of mournful and tender compassion."—*Heinrich Heine.*

Goddess of dreams, mother of love and sorrow,
Such sorrow as from love's fair promise flows,
Such love as from love's martyrdom doth borrow,
That morning calm which only *sorrow* knows.

Venus, Madonna! so serene and tender,
In thy calm altar-throne of life and love,
More fair than when of old thy sea-born splendor
Surprised the scene of Olympian Jove!

Not those the lips that with empassioned pleading
Poured subtle hosts through Adon's languid frame
Till, over check and brow, their kisses raining,
Thrilled to his heart and turned its frost to flame.

Thy soul transcending passion's wild illusion,
In fantasy and fever never sees
Broods tenderly in thought's devout seclusion,
O'er some lost love-dream lingering in lay or lute.

Thy face seems touched with pity for the anguish
Of earth's disconsolate and lonely hearts,
For all the hopes and loves that have perished in solitary homes and sordid marts.

With pity for the faithlessness and feigning,
The vain repentance and the long regret,
The perfumed lamps in lonely chambers waning,
The untouched fruits on golden salvers set:

With pity for the patient watchers yearning
Through lonely casements over midnight moors,
Thrilled by the echo of far feet returning
Through the blank darkness of the empty doors:

With sorrow for the coy, sweet bude that cherish
In virgin pride love's nursery of gloom,
And in their fair unfolded beauty perish
Fading like flowers that know not how to bloom:

With sorrow for the over-blown pale roses
That waste their perfumes on the wandering air
For all the penitents that life imposes
On passion's dream, on love's divine despair.

Mlle. Schneider.

(Translated for the Cincinnati Commercial, from Le Soir of Paris.)

My dear reader, if you take it into your head to pay a visit to Mlle Schneider, *Diana of Ml.* Offenbach's operas, who, in her retreat, enjoys a greater popularity than any other French actress, you must take your way to the Rue de Vernueil, walk across the pretty little square, with which M. Haussmann has seen it to embellish that part of the capital, and stop at the house situated on the corner of the aforesaid street and the Passage Martin. A rather pleasant looking old lady will let you welcome at the porter's lodge, and, if you say that you wish to see Mlle. Schneider, she will exclaim, "*Ah pre-cieux, cri-precieux!*"

I take it for granted that you are provided with a letter of introduction, or some other kind of "open sesame," or that Madame-selle knows that you are coming, and has consented to receive you; otherwise I would not advise you to ascend the rather narrow staircase leading to the dominions of the *Diva.* If you succeed with no such *passe-partout* as I mentioned, do not make the attempt to gain access to the *Diva.* For at the lading you will be received by Jean, her Alsacian footman, a rosy checked Hercules, six feet high, who will tell you in French, pronounced with a strong German accent, that the *Diva* is not at home, and a glance at the athletic arms of the footman will render you not at ease indisposed to question the truth of what he says, and to insist on forcing your way, in spite of him, into the room.

Well, then, we suppose that we have succeeded in satisfying M. Jean that we have a right to enter these sacred precincts, and he conducts us to the glass door in front, but small we enter a small antechamber, beautifully furnished and decorated,—much more so than the exterior of the house from the house would lead us to expect. In some respects this ante-room looks like a small photographic gallery. There are at least fifty photographs in handsome oval frames on the walls,—portraits of crowned heads, Princes, actors, musicians,—all of them in true democratic fashion, side by side. The most striking picture is that of the woman to whom it is addressed, "*Pour gai*," she exclaimed, "I am *so very fond for her!* But why did she bend herself to the miserable intrigue of making it appear as though I were a friend and acquaintance of mers?"

Few difficulties have ever arisen between the theatrical managers with whom she has had to do, for that is an instinct in receiving a literal salary will not be wondered at and objected to by any body; and the official directors concur in admiring her patience and the excellent manner in which she keeps her temper even under the most trying circumstances. She masters completely every *role* intrusted to her, before she comes to a rehearsal, and, despite her great reputation as an actress and cantatrice, she receives every suggestion of the leader and composer with perfect good humor. M. Offenbach first spoke to her about two or three years, but the celebrity she studied under the personal direction of M. Offenbach himself.

She has often been asked if it did not weary her to sing and perform the same *role* so many times, night after night, and she always frankly admitted that such would, undoubtedly, be the case, but for the applause bestowed upon her by the audiences.

Her favorite *role*, we need not say, is the Grand Duchess of Gerolstein, which she has rendered famous throughout the world. Strangely enough, M. Offenbach first spoke to her about the opera of his, she felt extreme reluctance to having anything to do with the *role* assigned to her, she said she did not like it, and was afraid the opera would make a *fiasco.*

The "Court of the Grand Duchess of Gerolstein" consists of six persons—her two aides-de-camp, her *femme de chambre*, a housemaid, a cook, and Jean, the Alsatian footman. The cook, fortunately, understands her business very thoroughly, for Mlle. Schneider likes a good table, and is generally blessed with an excellent appetite. Those whom she invites are always sure of a delightful pot au feu, however, of all the little family concerts which her sister gives once or twice a month to those who are intimate with her on terms with her, in the fine room adjoining to her sleeping apartment, the musicians are ambitiously calls her concert hall. It is about twice as large as the saloon, and furnished in an elegant, but much plainer style. One of Erard's grand pianos, a harp, a violoncello, and other musical instruments fill one side of the room, and there are, as may be expected, more chairs there than would be found in the room of a man who has not been married. The window-niches contain two beautiful statues of Orpheus and St Cecelia, and tasteful rather large paintings, and as many good-sized mirrors grace the walls.

The concerts generally almost all these concerts, and he accompanies the singers on the piano or violin. But he is too modest an only distinguished musician and composer who participates in these concerts. The principal musicians of the opera world of France and other countries have not deemed it beneath their dignity to come and contribute to the entertainment and amusement of the audience.

For, it M'lle Schneider has enemies, she also has many friends—not only because she is so hospitable and so charming, but because she is one of the most good-natured and kind-hearted creatures in the world. How many traits could be told in *proof* of this! She is a benefactress to many, many of her humbler colleagues; and, if the more ambitious and successful among them look upon her with feelings of jealousy and envy, the poorer ones never mention her name without a glance of gratitude and affection.

It is very seldom that she resents the insults and provocations of malicious rivalry in the spirit which they would seem to justify. The famous letter in which she stated that the report of her presence at the last fifty performances of the *Grande Duchesse* was a "tissu de mensonges," (tissue of lies), and that she had nothing to do with "*cette dame*," gave herself much pain when she heard that it had wrung tears from the eyes of the woman to whom it referred. "*Pour gai*," she exclaimed, "I am *so very fond for her!* But why did she bend herself to the miserable intrigue of making it appear as though I were a friend and acquaintance of mers?"

Two things are best calculated to show how utterly groundless these insinuations of despicable malice are. A certain very distinguished personage (Prince Napoleon) has been mentioned as the lover with whom M'lle Schneider kept up a *liaison*, causing thereby, as was asserted by the scandal-mongers, much grief and mortification to the excellent wife of that eminent man. Now, the simple truth is that M'lle Schneider never had an interview with him in her life, and not a word ever passed between the two.

It will be remembered what surprise was created last year when M. Lefeuvre published in the *Constitutionnel* the age of so many actresses, and stated also that M'lle Schneider was born in 1835, and that so far from being twenty-five years of age, as had been generally supposed, she was considerably over thirty years old. The fair enemies were in ecstasies on reading this. "How disagreeable this must be to the old coquette." "She would give all her diamonds if this statement could be proved erroneous." Such and similar were the exclamations by which her rivals manifested their malicious joy.

An acquaintance went at that time to M'lle. Schneider, and expressed regret at the indiscretion M. Lefeuvre had committed by publishing the year of her birth. The *Diva* listen with a fit of laughter. "Indiscretion!" she exclaimed. "Why, he came to me, and told me that he wished to ascertain my age, and that he would publish it together with that of most of the other actresses of the capital. I had no hesitation whatever in telling him when I was born." She then added, "It is not rather flattering for me that people should generally think that I am much younger than I really am?"

This is a fact. She does look younger than she really is, not only behind the footlights on the stage, but also when you see her close by and stand immediately in front of her. Her eyes sparkle and flash as merrily as those of a girl of fifteen, and the hot, withering air of the theatre has not injured her healthy complexion.

Her younger sisters attend to the duties of the household. Both of them are amiable, the young ladies, and, as they should do, they intensely love and admire their sister. One of them has a fine voice, and longs to become an actress like her sister. But Mlle Schneider is opposed to her going upon the stage, and as her sister always defer to her wishes and love to be ruled by her, M'lle Fanny has abandoned hopes of ever having her fine voice applauded by a delighted pit. Jean, however, all the little family concerts which her sister gives once or twice a month to those who are intimate with her on terms with her, in the fine room adjoining to her sleeping apartment, the musicians are ambitiously calls her concert hall. It is about twice as large as the saloon, and furnished in an elegant, but much plainer style. One of Erard's grand pianos, a harp, a violoncello, and other musical instruments fill one side of the room, and there are, as may be expected, more chairs there than would be found in the room of a man who has not been married. The window-niches contain two beautiful statues of Orpheus and St Cecelia, and tasteful rather large paintings, and as many good-sized mirrors grace the walls.

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